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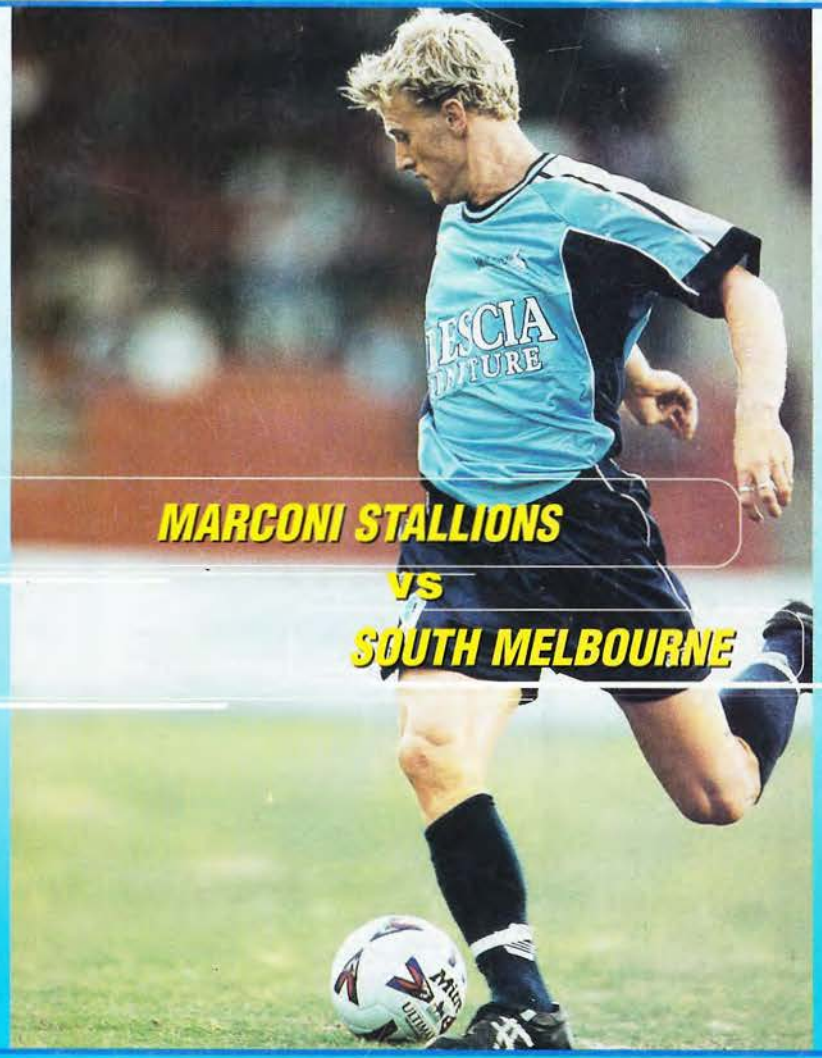

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Saturday 4th November, 2000 - Marconi Stadium: 7.00pm

Round 4 - 2000/2001 National Soccer League

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CONTRIBUTING PERSONNEL Eddie Krncevic, Dominic Longo, Lisa Severin, Luisa Pagliarini
PHOTOGRAPHY Joseph Murphy Photography

Survivor? You bet!

Nearly one year ago, an editorial titled "Walking with Dinosaurs" appeared in this humble publication and caused a minor stir in some media circles because of the perceived harshness of an 'opinion' expressed by the Editor. The issue last year was the respect (or rather lack of) that the Seven Network bestowed upon our National Team in the series of matches against Brazil. Yet the story for Australian Soccer remains the same, albeit to a different target this time - The N.S.L. The editorial in our 28th November, 1999 issue of 'Marconi Football' needs little adjusting to make it topical to the current scenario afflicting our game. Accordingly, we apologise in advance for this indulgence in self-plagiarism.

The Gold, Silver & Bronze medals for the 'Let's Give Them A Kick In The Guts While They're Down' Award just has to go to the Seven Network. The so-called Soccer network has seen fit to 'honour' their television contract with Australian Soccer by televising our N.S.L. in the 'Dracula' timeslot of Midnight on Tuesday night/Wednesday morning.

Our e-mail box has been inundated with angry supporters expressing their disgust so evidently there are many people out there annoyed at the total disrespect the network is showing our National League and indeed sport. The question however beckons: Have these same people also contacted the station to issue a protest? This folks, is the only thing that will possibly make them pay attention - Public Demand. Get on the phones, write letters and e-mail them, get in their faces and show just how many of us are out here. (Check out Page 23 for a website collating such protests)

To exasperate the insult of this television snub, not to mention the numerous and persistent non-football journalists' tirades at our sport; as soon as the World Cup rolls around, these very same 'Soap Box' critics will rise again. This time however, their manner will be total and unashamed jingoism, proudly proclaiming the virtues of our National League and its role in fostering talent for our Australian National Team.

Mark these words, you'll also read about how unfair FIFA treat us, the magnitude of the sport globally and the awe inspiring passion that only real football can bestow to an audience. All sorts of facts and figures will be regurgitated with monotonous regularity by the 'nouveau' football experts, and National League club's football offices will be inundated with telephone calls from these same ignorant journalists wanting information on everything football related. In other words, the bandwagon will again be overflowing.

We'll all bend over backwards to assist of course, just as the least popular kid at school jumps at the chance to have a dance with the 'cool kids' at the school disco. We all live in hope that once we reach our "Holy Grail" (World Cup qualification), then these 'cool kids' will actually want to dance with us, even if they have another choice – but will they?

One of the biggest television hits of 2000 was a show about a group of people, totally isolated from the outside world, all competing for attention of their peers in order to remain relevant to that particular & solitary territory. Not an unreasonable comparison of the feelings and actions that some media organisations and individuals hold towards our game.

It seems that if we are to be the ultimate "Survivor" in this cold war of attrition with some sections of the media there needs to be favourable (media) partner to count upon through times of adversity. At this stage, this partner seems as far away as ever, or at least until we qualify for our 'Holy Grail' next year.

Alas, as always, this editorial holds absolutely ZERO fear for negative repercussions, as I'm certain that the 'judges' masquerading as our sport's "Tribal Council" don't even know we are playing South Melbourne tonight, in Round 4 of the 2000/2001 Australian National Soccer League.

Tonight's big match is proudly presented by...

FAIRFIELD CHAMPION - NEWSPAPER

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emphasising eddie

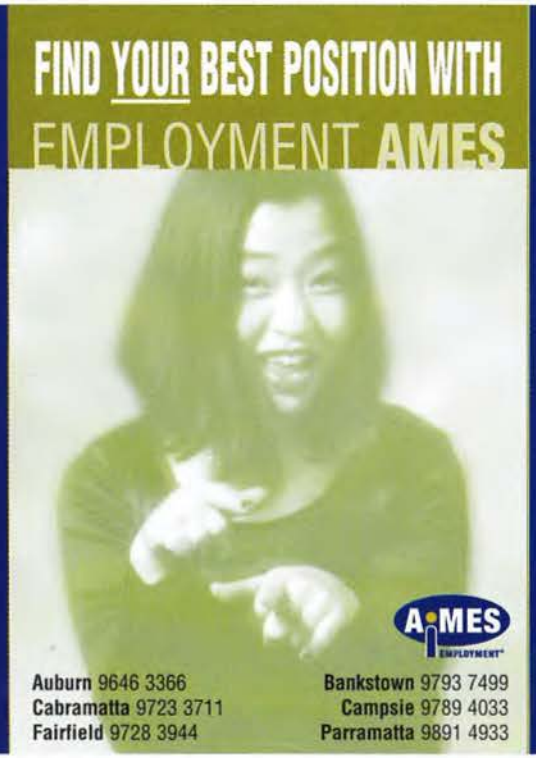
Tonight's game between Marconi Stallions and South Melbourne is one of the highlights of any NSL calendar. The meeting of our two sides, who are both founding members of the National Soccer League has traditionally resulted in some epic clashes, and I'm sure this evening's contest will be no different.

Just like our own club, South Melbourne have a proud history of ambition and achievement and it was they who represented Australia and Oceania so well as the region's standard bearers in the inaugural World Club Champions tournament held in Brazil. Our visitors are always a competitive side, and certainly the Marconi team tonight will go into the game in the correct frame of mind. However, as I pointed out in our opening match day magazine EVERY game is an important one, and whether the opposition be a club of South Melbourne's pedigree or anyone else, each game will be approached with the same degree of preparation and commitment.

Last Saturday's 0-1 defeat at Wollongong was, as you would expect, disappointing from my point of view, but I thought that there were still some positives we could take from the game. David Aceski had an outstanding game in goals, and generally the defence was tight. Last season we conceded 49 goals, and among that number was a sprinkling which fell in the 'avoidable' category. We have worked hard to tighten our backline, and eliminate silly errors, and although we lost to Wollongong through what could be termed a defensive mix up, the statistic of only having conceded one goal in three games is pleasing.

If you look at the overseas league tables in the metropolitan daily papers, you will notice that generally speaking, the teams at the top of their respective league have conceded few goals. We needed to tighten up at the back, and we have done so. That is not to say that we have a defensive focus. Far from it, as defenders are encouraged to go forward when the opportunity is there and the evidence of that is there for all to see with the names of Chad Gibson and Angelo Constanzo already appearing on the scorers list.

Against Wollongong our attack created a few good opportunities, and it was only a couple of goal-line clearances and some excellent goalkeeping that kept us out. As an ex-striker myself I know that it only takes one goal to settle the nerves, lift the confidence and then the goals flow. With your vocal backing and support, hopefully tonight we will put that defeat behind us, and return to winners circle.



the armband talks

Captain of the Marconi Stallions 2000/2001 National Soccer League squad, Domonic Longo offers readers his views and insights on our team's progress throughout the 2000/20001 season exclusively for "Marconi Football".

We may have suffered our first defeat of the season last week against Wollongong, but anyone who may be thinking that the Marconi bubble has burst had better think again. I thought that we deserved a share of the spoils, and but for some good goalkeeping and the loss of a late goal, we would have come back from Wollongong with a point. Although we lost, there was absolutely no mood of despondency in the camp, and as we watched a video replay of the game on the bus trip home, the feeling was that the effort we put in merited something rather than nothing.

It is always disappointing to lose a late goal, but that is the nature of the game of football, and it won't be the last time a side dips out in the closing minutes. As I say we lost that one, but we certainly didn't dwell on the defeat, and almost immediately were concentrating on tonight's game. And what a game it should be! One certainly doesn't have to motivate oneself for games against South Melbourne, as they are one of the biggest names in the league. A quality side with outstanding players in all departments, South Melbourne are one of the aristocrats of Australian soccer, and tonight's match should be an entertaining affair.

Last season we were fortunate enough to 'do the double' over them, and I'm sure that they will have that in the back of their minds as they attempt to exact their revenge.

For our part, we will go out tonight and attempt to build on the solid performances we have delivered so far this season. There a lot of new faces at the club this year, and it is a continuing building process which started during the pre season games and continues even today. We have a big squad at Marconi, something that is essential if we are going to go all the way to the knockout stages, as loss of form, injuries and suspensions can all affect the final placing in the table come the end of the season. While this player or that player may not figure in every game, or even a majority of games, it doesn't mean that they are any less important than some others are.

There is a long way to go in the competition, and quality replacements are essential to enable a side to continue its momentum. We look forward to your most vocal support this evening as we vie to reignite our winning form and continue our momentum tonight against South Melbourne, in what should be a memorable encounter.

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JOHN MAISANO
Midfield
D.O.B:
6th January, 1979
Joined Marconi:
2000/2001
NSL Debut:
13/10/00
for Marconi Stallions
vs Parramatta Power
(W2 - 0)

Marconi Games:	3
Marconi Goals:	0
NSL Games:	3
NSL Goals:	0

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the sideline view

with
fred (Forza) Legget

MARCONI STALLIONS
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THE CISCO KID

When Angelo Costanzo popped up in our previous home game against Canberra Cosmos to knock in the winner, it was his first goal in 7 seasons of NSL football. A milestone in his career certainly, but it was only a few years ago that Angelo thought that his soccer career was over – the result of an horrific, violent incident in 1996.

Having just finished playing for his then club Adelaide City against a Melbourne opponent, Angelo was with his team mates on the bus headed for Melbourne airport and a flight back to Adelaide.

A group of youths threw rocks at the team bus and suddenly Angelo's world became a nightmare as a shard of glass from a broken window was embedded in his left eye.

Angelo was rushed to hospital and underwent an emergency operation to save the sight in his left eye. Several anxious weeks later it still looked like Angelo's career was over, but he surprised his doctors by recovering fully.

Said Angelo, *"The thought of never being able to play again was very hard to take, but luckily everything worked out all right. I was back on the park two months later, although I had to wear special protective glasses whenever I took the park for the remainder of that season."*

Having survived that horrendous experience Angelo continued to star in Zoran Matic's Adelaide City side, and even tried his luck overseas on a couple of occasions. *"I had trials with Hibernian in Scotland and things were looking good, but in the end it didn't work out and I returned to Australia. Similarly, prior to this season I was at Norwich in England, but nothing became of it."*

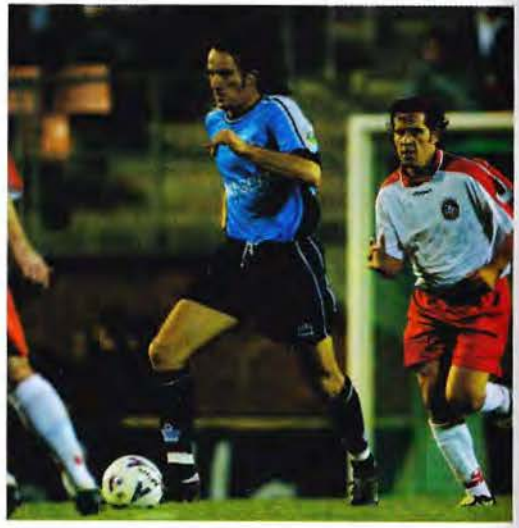
After six years at Adelaide, Angelo decided a change of scenery was due, and Marconi coach Eddie Krncevic was delighted to obtain the signature of the 24-year-old former South Australian Premier League player of the year.

Angelo's form in the opening games of this season has been such that even at this early stage of the season, sections of the soccer media are already suggesting that a Socceroo call up is not out of the question. Angelo, who played for the Australian Under 20 side in Venezuela a few years ago, would be delighted if a full international call up came around, and he realises that for that to happen he needs to continue his outstanding form for Marconi.

"Like any player, I'd love to represent my country at the highest level, but that is only going to happen if I perform on the field for Marconi. If it happens, it happens, if not, well..."

Angelo may, or may not taste Socceroo glory, and may or may not eventually join the exodus of talented Australians plying their trade overseas, but for now he is just delighted to be out on the park playing for Marconi.

Back in 1996 when that rock shattered the bus window and turned Angelo's life upside down, it all looked so bleak, but he has survived that and is now delighting his new fans at Marconi with some super performances.



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The Dawning of a New Era

By Luisa Pagliarini

It is well documented that our beloved Marconi Stallions were the first Australian club to have scored 1000 goals in the National Soccer League and remain as one of only three clubs (including Adelaide City Force & South Melbourne) to have survived all 25 seasons since 1977. The dawning of the 2000/2001 N.S.L. season is also seen as the beginning of a new era for our Stallions, such are the numerous changes to the playing personnel.

This 'new look' Marconi made its debut three weeks ago against Parramatta Power in the opening match of the season at Parramatta Stadium with no fewer than five (5) new Stallions wearing the famous sky-blue for the first time: Angelo Costanzo, Norman Tome, John Maisano, Raphael Bove, and John Gibson.

Royce Brownlie on the ball in his NSL debut vs Wollongong Wolves (28/10/00)

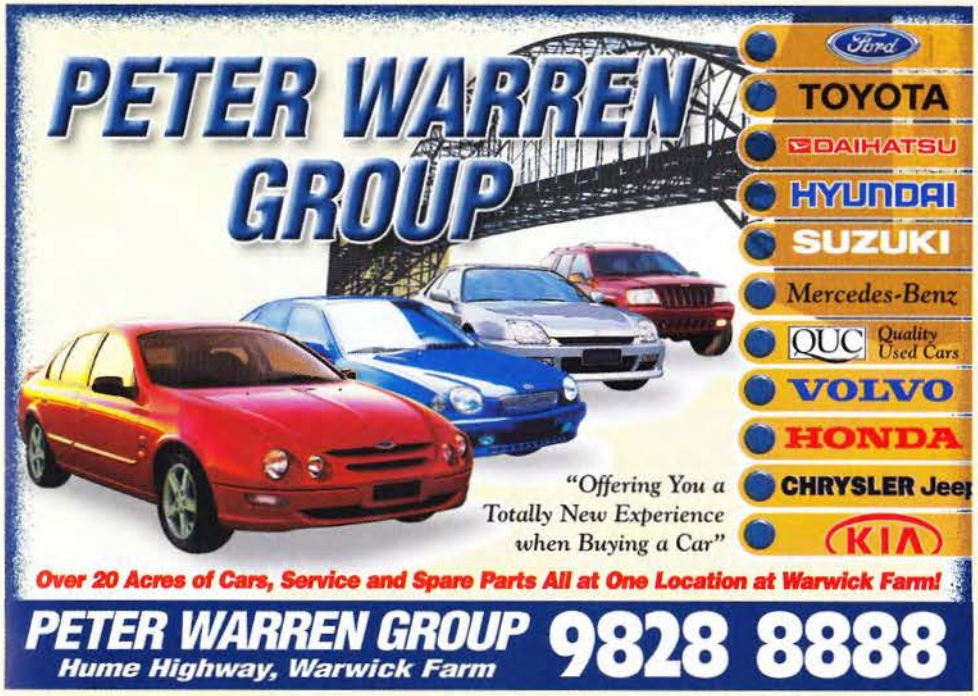
Marconi, having embarked on a rebuilding program, lost a few experienced players in the off season: Zeljko Babic (St Truiden - Belgium), Danny Invincible (Swindon Town - England), Francis Awaritefe (Sydney United) and the captain Brad Maloney (Perth Glory) have all departed the 'Stable'. Despite this turnover in the player roster, big things are always expected from this Club, such is the record of success over the past 25 N.S.L. campaigns. Although many critics predicted that it would take some time for the new team to gel, back to back victories over Canberra Cosmos and Parramatta Power was an important ingredient for the team's confidence and more so for the fans expectations of glory for the new season.

Although this club has achieved an equal record 4 national championships, it has been 8 long seasons since Marconi last claimed the national title. The opening games of the season however, have wetted the appetite for an outright record fifth to our ever impatient fans.

In the first round match versus Parramatta Power the Stallions played a very composed game with Chad Gibson (man of the match) scoring two goals! The Stallions opening home match against the Cosmos, may not have been the greatest game of football played at Marconi Stadium, however this hard fought match was won when Angelo Costanzo (man of the match) scored his inaugural N.S.L goal.

Our third competition game was played against the defending N.S.L champions, Wollongong Wolves at WIN Stadium last Saturday night. Although the Stallions went down 1-0 due to an unfortunate goal in the final minutes of the match, there were indisputable positives to emanate from this match.

Tonight the Stallions face another foundation club, South Melbourne. Obviously, every game is an important one, but few match the glamour and prestige of playing our Victorian championship rivals. With a great recent home record against South Melbourne, we are all looking for another tremendous contest between these monoliths of the Australian National Soccer League.



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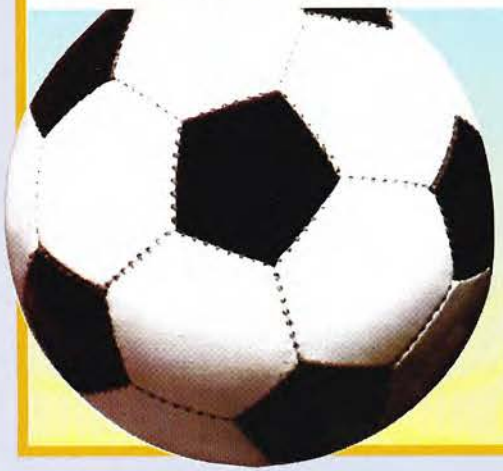

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Stallion Season Squad Statistics

ROUND	VENUE	OPPONENT	RESULT	CROWD	1. ACESKI	2. C.GIBSON	3. M.BABIC	4. COSTANZO	5. LONGO	6. P.K.KIM	7. AFKOS	8. McDONALD	9. TOME	10. J.MAISANO	11. CARE	12. RADULOVIC	13. BOVE	14. FARAH	15. BROWNLIE	16. KARL	17. J.GIBSON	18. SMITH	19. RENAUD	20. TURNBULL	21. BELL	22. TRAJANOVSKI	23. ZORIC	24. JUNIOR	25.	26.	27.	28.	29.	30.
1	A	Parramatta Power	0-2	5,299	P	P2	B	P	P	I	I	P	PS	P	SP	I	PS	P	#	PS	P	I	P	B	#	I	#	YL						
2	H	Canberra Cosmos	1-0	4,083	P	P	YL	P1	P	I	I	PS	P	P	I	I	P	P	#	B	SP	I	PS	B	P	I	#	SP						
3	A	Wollongong Wolves	1-0	4,011	P	P	YL	P	P	I	I	P	SP	SP	YL	PS	P	P	PS	#	SP	I	P	B	PS	I	I	YL						
4	H	South Melbourne																																
5	A	Sydney United																																
6	H	Sydney Olympic																																
7	A	Eastern Pride																																
8	H	Kingz F.C.																																
9	A	Northern Spirit																																
10	H	Adelaide City Force																																
11	A	Perth Glory																																
12	H	Carlton																																
13	H	Newcastle Breakers																																
14	A	Melbourne Knights																																
15	H	Brisbane Strikers																																
16	H	Parramatta Power																																
17	A	Canberra Cosmos																																
18	H	Wollongong Wolves																																
19	A	South Melbourne																																
20	H	Sydney United																																
21	A	Sydney Olympic																																
22	H	Eastern Pride																																
23	A	Kingz F.C.																																
24	H	Northern Spirit																																
25	A	Adelaide City Force																																
26	H	Perth Glory																																
27	A	Carlton																																
28	A	Newcastle Breakers																																
29	H	Melbourne Knights																																
30	A	Brisbane Strikers																																
		2000/2001 Season Matches			3	3	0	3	3	0	0	3	3	3	1	1	3	3	1	1	3	0	3	0	2	0	0	1						
		2000/2001 Season Goals			0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
		Total Marconi Stallion Matches			19	63	70	3	117	54	0	75	3	3	74	1	3	56	1	16	3	96	122	29	2	64	140	4						
		Total Marconi Stallion Goals			0	9	1	1	3	4	0	2	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	3	0	13	10	0	0	15	15	0						
		Total N.S.L Matches			19	79	222	136	163	54	37	75	175	3	74	1	25	56	1	23	292	143	160	29	2	241	140	4						
		Total N.S.L Goals			0	10	3	1	5	4	0	2	52	0	7	0	0	0	0	8	44	19	14	0	0	59	15	0						

LEGEND

P: Played		Yellow Card	X: Suspended
YL: Youth League			I: Injured
PS: Substituted		Red Card	Rp: Represented
SP: Substitute On			1 (Bold Number): GOAL

MARCONI STALLIONS vs SOUTH MELBOURNE

Saturday 4th November, 2000

Round 4 – 2000/2001 National Soccer League

STALLIONS SQUAD		SOUTHS SQUAD
ACESKI David	< 1 >	Michael PETKOVIC
GIBSON Chad	< 2 >	Steve IOSIFIDIS
BABIC Mark	< 3 >	Fausto DE AMICIS
COSTANZO Angelo	< 4 >	Mehmet DURAKOVIC
LONGO Dominic	< 5 >	Robert LIPAROTI
KIM Pan-Keun	< 6 >	David CLARKSON
AFKOS James	< 7 >	Steve PANOPOULOS
McDONALD Darren	< 8 >	Vaughan COVENY
TOME Norman	< 9 >	Paul TRIMBOLI
MAISANO John	< 10 >	Con BOUTSIANIS
CARE Christian	< 11 >	John ANASTASIADIS
RADULOVIC Sasa	< 12 >	Richie ALAGICH
BOVE Raphael	< 13 >	Andy VLAHOS
FARAH Buddy	< 14 >	
BROWNLIE Royce	< 15 >	Goran LOZANOVSKI
KARL Harry	< 16 >	Zeljko SUSA
GIBSON John	< 17 >	Rade CULIBRK
SMITH Mike	< 18 >	Elias DEMOURTZIDIS
RENAUD Brendan	< 19 >	Patrick KISNORBO
TURNBULL Michael	< 20 >	Chris JONES
BELL Simon	< 21 >	
TRAJANOVSKI Kris	< 22 >	
ZORIC Vlado	< 23 >	
JUNIOR SAUTURAGA Josaia	< 24 >	
	< 25 >	
	< 26 >	
	< 27 >	
	< 28 >	
	< 30 >	
EDDIE KRNCEVIC	**< COACH >**	**MIKE PETERSEN**

PREVIOUS THREE LEAGUE MEETINGS

27th February, 2000	- Round 23 (1999/2000 N.S.L.):	AWAY WIN	1 - 2
31st October, 1999	- Round 05 (1999/2000 N.S.L.):	HOME WIN	2 - 0
21st February, 1999	- Round 21 (1998/1999 N.S.L.):	AWAY LOSS	2 - 0

2000/2001 NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

As at End of Round 3 – 30th October, 2000

Position	TEAMS	PLAYED	WIN	DRAW	LOSS	HOME	AWAY	PAST 4 RESULTS	GOALS SCORED	GOALS CONCEDED	POINTS	GOAL DIFFERENCE	SELF UPDATE POINTS	SELF UPDATE POSITION
1	Sydney United	3	3	0	0	2-0-0	1-0-0	- WWW	6	2	9	+ 4		
2	Sydney Olympic	3	2	1	0	2-0-0	0-1-0	- WDW	5	0	7	+ 5		
3	Kingz F.C.	3	2	0	1	2-0-0	0-0-1	- LWW	7	4	6	+ 3		
4	Marconi Stallions	3	2	0	1	1-0-0	1-0-1	- WWL	3	1	6	+ 2		
5	Melbourne Knights	3	2	0	1	1-0-0	1-0-1	- WWL	4	5	6	- 1		
6	Carlton	3	1	2	0	0-1-0	1-1-0	- WDD	5	4	5	+ 1		
7	Wollongong Wolves	3	1	2	0	1-1-0	0-2-0	- DDW	4	3	5	+ 1		
8	South Melbourne	3	1	1	1	0-1-0	1-0-1	- WLD	4	3	4	+ 1		
9	Northern Spirit	3	1	1	1	0-1-0	1-0-1	- LDW	3	2	4	+ 1		
10	Perth Glory	3	1	1	1	1-0-0	0-1-1	- DWL	3	3	4	0		
11	Canberra Cosmos	3	1	0	2	1-0-1	0-0-1	- LLW	4	3	3	+ 1		
12	Brisbane Strikers	3	1	0	2	0-0-1	1-0-1	- LWL	4	5	3	- 1		
13	Parramatta Power	3	1	0	2	1-0-1	0-0-1	- LLW	4	5	3	- 1		
14	Eastern Pride	3	0	1	2	0-1-1	0-0-1	- DLL	2	5	1	- 3		
15	Newcastle United	3	0	1	2	0-0-1	0-1-1	- DLL	2	8	1	- 6		
16	Adelaide City Force	3	0	0	3	0-0-2	0-0-1	- LLL	1	8	0	- 7		

OTHER ROUND 4 MATCHES

Fri 3-11-00	Northern Spirit	Vs	Kingz F.C.	at North Sydney Oval
Fri 3-11-00	Adelaide City Force	Vs	Eastern Pride	at Hindmarsh Stadium
Fri 3-11-00	Newcastle United	Vs	Parramatta Power	at Marathon Stadium
Sat 4-11-00	Brisbane Strikers	Vs	Canberra Cosmos	at Suncorp Metway Stadium
Sat 4-11-00	Perth Glory	Vs	Sydney Olympic	at Perth Oval
Sun 5-11-00	Melbourne Knights	Vs	Wollongong Wolves	at Knights Stadium
Sun 5-11-00	Carlton	Vs	Sydney United	at Bob Jane Stadium

NEXT HOME MATCH

MARCONI STALLIONS VS SYDNEY OLYMPIC
SATURDAY 18 TH NOVEMBER, 2000
KICK OFF: 7:00PM

national youth league report

with

Jean Paul De Marigny (Youth Coach)

and

Sam D'Alessandro (Colts Coach)

YOUTH TEAM

It has been a reasonably solid start to our 2000/2001 campaign with the boys picking up points on the park despite not yet hitting top gear. This is, of course, to be expected of all teams as we are only into the first month of serious league football.

Last Saturday night's match against the undefeated Wollongong Wolves outfit was a match that should have gained our team three points instead of the solitary one, such was our domination of the game. Alas, it is always said that football is about scoring goals and unfortunately, poor options and some misfortune conspired to deny the boys what would have been a well deserved victory.

There has been no reminiscing on this match and we have trained well all week for tomorrow afternoon's clash against our flying Colts. Our club's youngest National League outfit has been playing some solid football in the opening weeks of this campaign and we will have to be at our best to claim the three points. Looking forward to your support of our Youth teams tomorrow afternoon at 5pm.

COLTS TEAM

It has been a most successful fortnight since my last report in 'Marconi Football' with successive victories over the A.C.T. & Queensland Academy teams respectively.

There is obviously a long way to go in this competition and although we have picked up some good results, I am more pleased about the way our boys bounced back from the opening round loss to the A.I.S.

We should remember that a vast number of this Colts team have progressed through from this season's Grade 16 Super Youth League team, so this N.Y.L. season remains very much a learning experience for their ultimate aim of playing 1st grade in future years.

Tomorrow afternoon is our biggest test to date as we take on our 'senior' Youth team right here at 5pm.

MARCONI YOUTH SQUAD

1 Daniel SCHWARZER (GK)
2 Todd BRODIE
3 Anthony HARTSHORN
4 Saso TRAJCEVSKI
5 Steve BOZINOSKI
6 Ryan MANENTE
7 Frank DE ROIT
8 Marco MAISANO
9 Grant LAST
10 Kevo GULESSERIAN
11 Anthony MONDELLO
12 Erick ANABALON
13 Nathan RIVERA
14 Aaron BENNETT
15 Graeme O'DONNEL
16 Daniel LETTIERI
17 Josaia S.JUNIOR
18 Luke FLYNN
19 Michael BEAUCHAMP
20 Matthew NASH (GK)
21 Overage Player
22 Overage Player
23 Overage Player
23 Overage Player

- *A maximum of four (4) overage players permitted per match*
- *Eligible aged players must be born after 1st January, 1981*

2000/2001 NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

Northern Division, As at end of Round 3 – 30th October, 2000

*National Youth League Draw: Courtesy Soccer Australia

Position	TEAMS	PLAYED	BYE	WIN	DRAW	LOSS	GOALS SCORED	GOALS CONCEDED	POINTS
1	Northern Spirit	3	0	3	0	0	12	4	9
2	MARCONI STALLIONS	3	0	2	1	0	5	1	7
3	MARCONI STALLIONS COLTS	3	1	2	0	1	10	4	6
4	A.I.S.	3	0	2	0	1	4	3	6
5	Wollongong Wolves	2	1	1	1	0	4	0	4
6	Parramatta Power	3	0	1	1	1	6	4	4
7	Sydney Olympic	3	0	1	1	1	5	4	4
8	N.S.W.I.S	2	0	1	1	0	2	1	4
9	Newcastle United	2	0	1	0	1	3	1	3
10	Sydney United	3	0	1	0	2	6	4	3
11	Canberra Cosmos	2	1	1	0	1	3	4	3
12	Q.A.S	4	0	1	0	3	4	11	3
13	Sydney Olympic Academy	3	0	0	1	2	3	6	1
14	Newcastle United Colts	1	0	0	0	1	0	6	0
15	A.C.T.A.S	3	0	0	0	3	0	15	0

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AND…Don't forget to keep up to date with our Stallions at: **www.marconifc.com**
Happy Surfing!

IS THIS THE HOLY GRAIL …OR A CRUEL HOAX???

PACKER PLANS WORLD SERIES FOOTBALL

A Football 365 Special by Gavin Willacy

While FIFA debated the future of the World Cup, the Club World Championship and the Confederations Cup in Switzerland, one of the biggest media moguls in the world is reportedly close to launching a new international tournament on the football world. Kerry Packer, who split the world of cricket in two in the seventies when he introduced World Series Cricket - floodlit international matches and unofficial tours featuring star players - in a successful bid to shake the game up, is believed to be putting the finishing touches to his grand football plan: the Indian-Pacific Cup, although it is unlikely to retain that unwieldy and unattractive moniker for long.

According to rumours in Australasia, Packer, who owns a huge media empire and wants his share of football on his Nine TV network, is putting his weight behind a new annual cup competition involving countries from the Indian-Pacific coastal rim, including Australia, South Africa, Japan, USA, Chile and Mexico. All of these nations have massive potential TV audiences and their national teams, while mainly ranked in the top 20-40 in the world by FIFA, often have long periods without competitive matches, particularly between World Cups.

For example, Australia only have games against fellow Oceania nations - tiny Polynesian islands and New Zealand, which they usually romp away with - every two years, acting as qualifiers for the World Cup and Confederations Cup. Unless they qualify for the finals, and they have yet to do so in the World Cup (ahem…what about 1974 guys: ED), they have to make do with irregular friendlies against the more established footballing powers in Europe and low-profile invitation tournaments.

Senior Socceroo Tony Vidmar, the Rangers defender, was encouraged when Football365 broke the news to him about the prospective competition. "It's the first I've heard of it, but it sounds great," he said. "For Australia, we only have the World Cup and now the Confederations Cup to look forward to. And to concentrate on just one tournament every four years is very hard. If we could have another major competition to play in it would be a huge boost for us. I think they should definitely push forward with this and try to get something sort out as soon as possible."

Of the other teams expected to be invited to take part, Japan also need games before they co-host the 2002 World Cup Finals, and afterwards, when they hope to ride the expected wave of soccer fever; South Africa have to play non-lucrative games against fellow African teams in World Cup and African Nations qualifiers but could trigger for larger investment from sponsors and TV if their current games against better opponents were competitive rather than friendlies; and Chile, despite having a lengthy World Cup qualifying campaign, will be left twiddling their thumbs for almost two years if they fail to qualify for the next World Cup.

Like Australia, the United States are constantly striving for worldwide respect but are hemmed in by their location and population. The Gold Cup – the North & Central American Confederation championship – is a failure and although it is easy to arrange fixtures against Latin American opposition which attract large crowds, sadly, the majority of those fans show up to support the opposition rather than the USA. The Americans already play the likes of Chile, Mexico and South Africa in friendlies anyway, so there is room to make these more competitive games. Asian Football Confederation General Secretary Dato' Peter Velappan is only too aware of the need to improve competition for his teams. "We have to play against good teams, not just amongst ourselves," he said on Monday. "Mentally, our players are still not strong. We must play against European and good African teams. We must play matches in Munich, Rome, Barcelona and London.
This is how our players will develop."

HAVE YOUR SAY... Fans in the Pacific rim - would you be pleased to have your own tournament and do away with so many meaningless friendlies or is it one competition too far? Would you go to watch Australia v South Africa just because it's a competitive game? Who would win a Pacific Rim Championship?
E-mail your views to: **theeditor@football365.co.uk**

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Stallions of tomorrow

Looking back upon AND forward to - the progress of our Marconi Stallions Junior and Youth Football Program

As we conclude the trials for the 2001 season Marconi Stallions Junior and Youth League teams, we look back on the various teams' successes.. This issue of "Stallions of Tomorrow" looks back upon our Young Stallions Cadets of Season 2000.

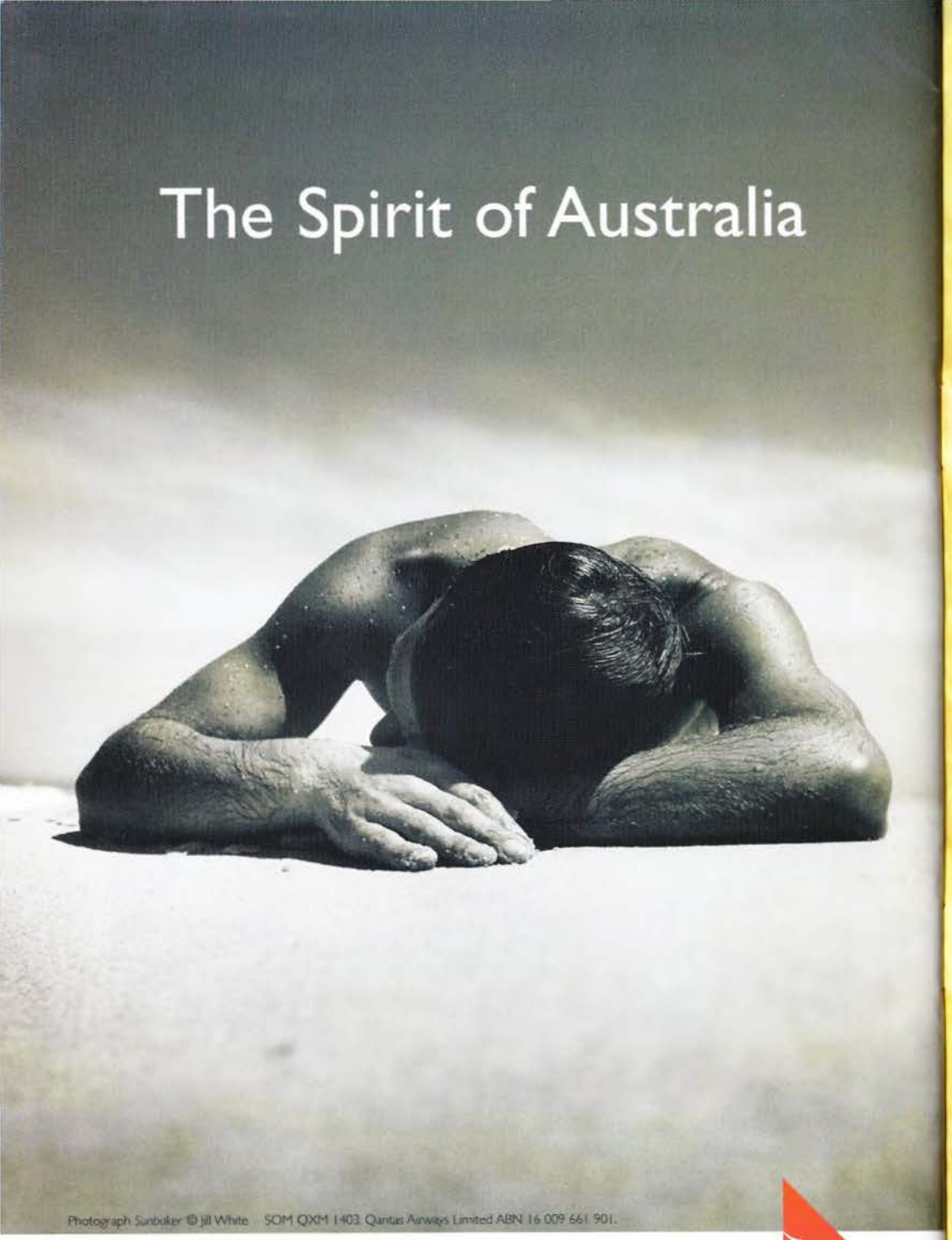
The 2000 season saw the second year of the Super Cadet League competition. Both our Grade 11 and 12 teams finished 3rd on the competition ladder and earned our club 2nd position in the Cadets Club Championships.

Our Grade 11 team, coached by Claudio Becerra, was a team that focussed on developing skills and played some of the best soccer for boys of such a young age. From the outset this team worked hard to be physically and mentally prepared. As the season progressed these boys continued to grow stronger as a unit working on team play rather than individualism. The run home for the team was not an easy one, but after sorting out a period of ups and downs, these boys proved to be strong enough to be placed 3rd at the end of the competition.

The Grade 12 team, coached by Rick Chiellini, proved to be a team with a calibre of players more than ready to take the step into Super Youth League in 2001. This team also came 3rd on the competition table at the end of 19 games and fell just one win short of a Grand Final appearance. Although the boys scored an impressive 56 goals conceding only 15 during the regular season, Grand Final aspirations were put to an end by Central Coast Coasties.

REPORT DRAFTED BY LISA SEVERIN
Junior & Youth Football Coordinator

The Spirit of Australia



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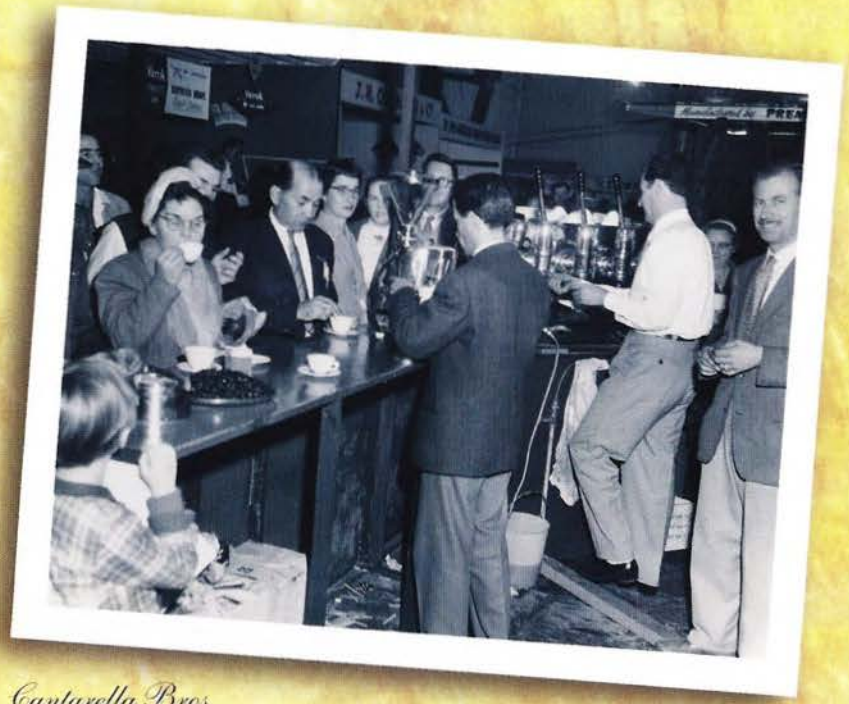

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